I

Library

MELKSHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

THE

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND

Public Health Inspector

For the Year 1966

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Public Health Officers of the Council	2
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT	
Vital Statistics	3 and 4
Causes of Death	5
Infectious Diseases	6
Immunisation	7 and 8
County Council Health Services	9
General	10
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR'S REPORT	
Introduction	11
Housing Acts 1957 etc.	12
Public Health Acts 1936 and 1961	13
Clean Air Act	13
Prevention of Damage by Pests	14
Caravan Sites	14
Miscellaneous Acts	14 and 15
Food and Drugs Act	15 and 16
Swimming Pools	16
Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act	17
Factories Act	18

To the Chairman and Members of

MELKSHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Langdon and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you this report on the work of your Health Department for the year 1966.

There is little of special note to draw your attention to in this year's work.

I am still uneasy about the absence of routine visits to Food premises. The investigation of complaints is not the main way to tackle food hygiene - it requires the frequent routine preventative visits to keep up the necessary standards in a growing shopping centre. However, this consumes a lot of time and under our present arrangements Mr. Acres is more than fully occupied. I had hoped that the appointment of a Technical Assistant would relieve some of the pressure of work and enable these inspections to be done - indeed towards the end of the six months our first Technical Assistant worked for us this was coming into being. The Council's decision not to replace him stopped dead our hopes of making some public health progress..

I also feel that some initial work should be done on our next clearance area scheme. This tends to be rather a prolonged business, as well as time consuming. Unless this work is carried on fairly continuously we are in danger of losing ground and have more of our older houses becoming unfit than those we have already cleared. This is particularly likely as, judging by the few applications for improvement grants, the owners of sub-standard houses are in the main, little interested in improving them.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Public Health Committee and the Councillors and also the other Council officers for their help in the year.

G. WOLFENDEN.

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE COUNTIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

G. Wolfenden, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

who is also Medical Officer of Health
to Bradford and Melksham Rural District
Council and Assistant County Medical Officer.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

W. F. Acres, M.A.P.H.I., A.R.S.H.

who is also Housing Maintenance Officer and
Petroleum Officer for Melksham Urban District Council.

OFFICE

1, King Street, Melksham.

Telephone Melksham 2307

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

https://archive.org/details/b29795205

VITAL STATISTICS

These are compiled from figures kindly supplied by the Registrar General.

(a) GENERAL

Area of the district 1,042 acres

Estimated population mid year 1966 9,250
Estimated population mid year 1965 9,080

(b) BIRTHS

Live Births

Births	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	87	97	184
Illegitimate	5	6	11
Total live births	92	103	195

The Birth Rate, based on the above figures was 21 per 1000. When the birth rate is corrected for comparability it becomes 20.4 per 1000 and can then be directly compared with the figure for England and Wales of 17.7 per 1000 (provisional) and our 1965 corrected figure of 22.8.

Even though the birth rate has dropped it will be seen we are still above average.

Still Births

Births	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	2	-	2
Illegitimate	-	-	-
Total still births	2	-	2

Still birth rate - 10.1 per 1000 still and live births.
Comparative figure for England and Wales 15.4 (provisional).

(c) DEATHS

Number of deaths - 53 males, 37 females. Total 90.

Death rate 9.7 per 1000. Comparable death rate 11.9 per 1000. The England and Wales figure is 11.7 (provisional) and our 1965 figure was 11.5

The actual number of deaths increased by 5.

(d) INFANT MORTALITY

Deaths of Infants under 1 year

Births	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	3	3	6
Illegitimate	-	-	-
Total Deaths	3	3	6

Deaths of Infants under 1 week

Births	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	-	-	-
Total Deaths	1	2	3

This gives the following rates.

Infant mortality rate - 30.8 deaths per 1000 live births (under 1 year).

Neo-natal mortality rate - 15.4 deaths per 1000 live births (under 1 month of age).

Perinatal mortality rate - 25.5 per 1000 live and still births (under 1 week of age and still births).

Due to the small numbers involved, comparison with previous years and with the England and Wales rates would be fallacious.

(e) CAUSES OF DEATH

	Male	Female	Total
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	1	2	3
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	5	-	5
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	-	1	1
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	3	2	5
Diabetes	1	-	1
Vascular lesions of Nervous System	4	9	13
Coronary Disease, Angina	16	5	21
Hypertension with Heart Disease	-	1	1
Other Heart Disease	3	4	7
Pneumonia	3	-	3
Bronchitis	4	-	4
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	1	-	1
Nephritis and Nephrosis	2	-	2
Congenital Malformations	-	1	1
Other Defined and ill-defined Diseases	2	8	10
Motor Vehicle Accidents	3	2	5
All other Accidents	3	1	4
Suicide	2	1	3
	53	37	90

35% of all deaths occurred in the 75 and over age group and 57% in the 65 and over age group. Deaths due to Cancer and Heart and Circulation diseases were similar in distribution to last year. Motor vehicle accidents caused 5 deaths compared with 1 in 1965.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Notifiable Infectious Disease

As outbreaks of measles are usually on alternate years, one would have anticipated very low figures for measles this year. However 53 cases occurred - separated in time from the 1965 outbreak by several months. We also had a moderate outbreak of Whooping Cough, mainly in the last quarter of the year.

No Tuberculosis or Food Poisoning was notified during the year.

Analysis of Infectious Disease by Age and Sex

Age Groups	Measles		Whooping Cough	
	M	F	M	F
Under 1 year	3	1	3	-
1 - years	13	11	5	4
5 - "	12	12	-	7
10 - "	1	-	-	1
15 - and adults	-	-	-	-
Total	29	24	8	12

Comparison with Previous Years

Disease	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
Scarlet Fever	1	2	2	-	-	-	-
Whooping Cough	1	10	-	-	1	-	20
Poliomyelitis -							
Paralytic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-paralytic	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Measles	2	231	3	127	4	184	53
Pneumonia	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Dysentery	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salmonellosis	1	-	2	-	-	-	-
Tuberculosis	3	1	4	3	1	-	-

Non-Notifiable Infectious Disease

A few scattered cases of possible infectious jaundice have occurred during the year.

Chickenpox was moderately troublesome at the end of the year.

IMMUNISATION

Primary immunisation of infants is at an excellent level in Melksham. Of all the babies born in Melksham in 1965 all appear to have been immunised as our percentages for Diphtheria immunisation (primarily "Triple Vaccine") is 110.7% and for Poliomyelitis 112.6%. This does not mean that some babies have been done twice but that quite a number of young babies have been brought into the town to live, added to those born here.

The actual figures, kindly supplied by the County Medical Officer of Health are given below.

Smallpox vaccination figures show a considerable improvement over previous years. This may have been helped by the requirements of Smallpox Vaccination for travel to Europe during much of this year's holiday season.

(a) Immunisation - Diphtheria, Whooping Cough and Tetanus

Year of Birth		1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1957-61	1951-56	Others Under 16
Primary imms.	Diph.	127	106	10	1	4	14	-	-
completed	Wh/c.	127	106	10	-	2	-	-	-
during 1966	Tet.	126	106	10	1	4	17	2	-
Reinf. injects	Diph.	-	58	86	5	33	180	2	-
administered	Wh/c.	-	35	55	4	2	6	1	-
during 1966	Tet.	-	58	86	5	33	198	5	1

(b) Smallpox Vaccinations

	Months				Years		
Age Group	0-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	1	2-4	5-15
Vaccinations	1	4	4	4	145	34	9
Re-vaccinations	-	-	-	-	-	1	2

(c) Poliomyelitis Oral Immunisation

Year of Birth	Primary Immunisation	Booster Dose
1966	113	-
1965	185 (56)	-
1964	28 (187)	-
1963	5 (28)	-
1962	7 (21)	36 (6)
1957-61	39	122
1951-56	3	1
Adults and Over 16	3	1
Total	383 (375)	160 (180)

Figures in brackets refer to 1965

COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SERVICES

The following health services operating in the district are provided by the County Health Committee:-

Care of expectant and nursing mothers and young children.
Domiciliary Midwifery.
Health Visiting.
Arrangements for vaccination and immunisation.
Ambulances and Ambulance Cars.
Domestic Helps
Arrangements under Part III of the National Health Service Act for the prevention of illness; care and after-care; and health education.
Mental Health Service.
Home Nursing and Care of the Elderly.

The Infant Welfare Clinic at the Health Clinic, Lowbourne continues to be well attended. The other activities at the Clinic continue.

A Cervical Cytology Clinic was started during the year for early detection of Cancer of the Cervix. This was well attended at the beginning but attendances dropped at the end of the year. The test is quickly done and is painless and is advised for all women between 25 and 60 years of age. Appointments can be made at the Health Clinic when it is open - Thursday afternoons being probably the best time. Clinics are held twice a month.

Not only does this test detect cancer at a very early stage but it detects it at a stage when a very minor operation cures it.

Health Visitors

We have four Health Visitors to serve the town. Their work is in the preventative and social medicine field, mainly with the very young and elderly. During the year, instead of each dealing with one area of the town a new system of "attachment" was started. Now each is attached to one or more doctors and deals with the problems of his patients only. This system appears to be working very well.

They also run the Infant Welfare Clinics, Relaxation Clinics for Ante-natal cases, mothers club etc. and help at immunisation clinics and school medical examinations. They lead a very busy and useful lives and we are very fortunate in Melksham in having four very keen and hard-working Health Visitors.

GENERAL

Hairdressers

During the year a complaint was raised regarding hygiene in gentlemens' hairdressers. A survey of these establishments in Melksham was carried out revealing a fairly good general standard of hygiene. It was decided by the Council to introduce model Bye-Laws on Hairdressing establishments to enable the Council to maintain some control over hygiene standards. These Bye-laws came into effect on 1st November, 1966.

Home Safety Committee

A Home Safety Committee, sponsored by the Council, commenced during the year. The Committee is constituted by representatives from all interested organisations, the Gas and Electricity Boards, Police and Fire Brigade and a Health Visitor and with four Councillors and the Medical Officer of Health as Council representative.

The Committees' first effort was a Fire Hazard exhibition. This was a good exhibition but failed in its purpose as it was very poorly attended due, one hopes, not to indifference but to inadequate publicity.

Learning from its early mistakes I feel this Committee should go on to be a useful asset to the well-being of the town.

Report of the

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Langdon and Gentlemen,

This is my tenth Annual Report for this area, and I much regret having to report a disappointing lack of progress. This was largely due to my prolonged absence at the beginning of the year, and then not being fully fit for a period thereafter. Added to which our office clerk, Mrs. Millard, resigned for family reasons after five years faithful service. Change of staff in such a small office causes a temporary hiatus in the administration.

The much needed increase in staff by the appointment of a Technical Assistant to myself enabled the bulk of the initial inspections under the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963 to be carried out. This particular appointment was not continued at the end of the probationary period, and in view of the credit squeeze, the Council decided not to fill this vacancy for that period. It was therefore not possible to complete all the initial inspections and to carry out the vital follow-up work. Also many other projects in mind had to be deferred until such time as a new appointment is made.

My thanks are again due to the Public Health Committee, to Dr. Wolfenden and Mrs. Wells (our new clerk), and to all colleagues for their ready help at all times.

W. F. ACRES.

Public Health Inspector.

HOUSING ACTS 1957, 1961 AND 1964

(i) Action during the year:

Number of inspections and re-inspections	32
Number of Closing Orders, Section 17/57 (whole house)	1
Number of Closing Orders, Section 17/57 (parts of houses)	-
Number of Demolition Orders, Section 17/57	-
Number of houses Demolished	2
Number of Limitation of Occupants Notices, Section 19/61 .	1

It was very satisfactory indeed to be able to note in September that the first tenants from the Clearance Area in Old Broughton Road were being re-housed. Official action having been commenced to that end in early 1964 meant that the occupants, mostly elderly people, and living in appalling circumstances had to wait much longer for re-housing than other persons on the Council's list living in far better conditions. One wonders if some amendment to the existing legislation could be devised to overcome this very real problem.

(ii) Common Lodging Houses

There are no such houses in the area.

(iii) Houses in Multiple Occupation

This problem was considered carefully by the Health Committee and it was agreed to consider a Scheme of Registration under Section 22 of the 1961 Act. Such a scheme would help to some extent in controlling the situation.

(iv) Improvements to Older Houses

A further 37 pre-war Council houses were modernised on discretionary grant basis under my control as Housing Maintenance Officer by the Council's own direct labour force at a cost of nearly £14,000. The advantages to the Council, as landlords, and to the tenants are most apparent. Control of the Council's 1,300 houses also enabled the Department to ensure good standards of repair and maintenance in all these houses.

The Health Department, strangely enough, is not involved in improvements to older private houses and it was disappointing to note that despite the Council publicising their own improvements by having three "show" houses open to the public in the past year or so, only nine standard improvement grants were applied for and granted in 1966.

The policy of improving older houses to modern standards is a fundamental in all public health progress and one would hope to see more applications by landlords and tenants in the future.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS 1936 AND 1961

(i) Number of Inspections 43

Number of Informal Notices served 7

Number of Statutory Notices served 1

Notices Complied with (Informal) 6

Notices Complied with (Statutory) 1

Relatively few complaints were received and no difficulties arose in having various defects repaired.

(ii) Verminous Premises and Other Infestations

No verminous premises were reported or discovered. Identification and advice on treatment was given in other instances of insect problems.

(iii) Drainage and Sewerage

Very few houses indeed are not connected to the public sewers in the Urban area, probably less than ten in all. The arrangements for sewerage and the disposal works are reasonably adequate. The Council are proposing to improve the sludge drying by use of machinery rather than the present system of open lagoons.

(iv) Water Supplies

The town receives its supplies mainly from the West Wilts Water Board, but part of the Northern area is linked to the North Wilts Board. Quality is excellent, and the unsatisfactory pressure on certain days is in the process of being remedied by the building of a new reservoir.

The waters are not plumbo-solvent, but are extremely hard. Copies of frequent sampling checks are received from the two Boards, and the occasional check sample is taken by the Department. All were satisfactory.

At the factory having its own well supply for domestic use, all samples taken proved satisfactory.

CLEAN AIR ACT 1956

No formal action was taken, and the infrequent complaint of smoke nuisance from factory chimneys was satisfactorily dealt with by informal action.

Two "Prior Approvals" under Section 3 of the Act were issued in respect of a new Chain Grate Stoker and a new furnace.

Two nuisances from the burning of industrial waste were dealt with - one informally, and one required service of a Statutory Notice.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT 1949

The part-time operator (shared with by the Rural District Council) continues to give excellent service with rodent control work.

During the year 137 properties were treated for rats or mice as compared with 115 the previous year.

The work is free for domestic premises, but a small charge is made to cover costs in other instances.

CARAVAN SITES AND CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT ACT 1960

The one residential site of 56 caravans is extremely well appointed and all conditions of site licence are fully maintained.

PETROLEUM (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1928

The overall position is now extremely satisfactory, and only one installation gives cause for concern. In this case, decisions on planning permissions to re-organise the filling station held up the necessary improvements.

The total gallonage of petrol stored in licensed premises is 63,700 (60,450) and 21 (21) licences were issued. Last year's figures in brackets.

The continued efficient work by the Council's Inspecting Officers - the Wiltshire County Fire Brigade - must once more be recorded.

RENT ACT 1957

No Certificates of Disrepair were applied for, and again no enquiries of any sort.

MILK AND DAIRIES

Regular routine sampling of all milks sold or produced and sold in the Urban area continued under delegated powers from the County Council. No 'Untreated' milk is sold and all figures therefore relate to pasteurised milks:-

Samples taken	26
Satisfactory	25

There are two producer/retailer licences issued by the County Council, and licences issued by this Council are as follows:-

Dealer's (Untreated) Licenced	1
Dealer's (Pre-packed) Untreated	1
Dealer's (Pre-packed) Pasteurised Licences	8

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT 1960

No specific action necessary during the year.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT 1955

(i) There are no egg pasteurisation plants in the district.

(ii) No systematic routine inspections under the Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960 were possible with the staff available, but I was able to link in some inspections with other work mainly the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act. In general, the standard is good and the new shops opened all tended to raise the overall standard.

Details of food premises as required by Circular 1/67:

(i) Trade Category	(ii) Fitted to comply with Reg.16 (Handbasins)	(iii) Reg.19 applies (sinks etc.)	(iv) Premises Fitted to comply with Reg.19 (Sinks etc.)
Restaurants, Snack Bars etc.	6		
Public Houses	9		
Confectioners	5		
Butchers	7	Full statistics	
Groceries & General	11	not available yet.	
Fruit & Vegetable	3		
Dairy	1		
Bakers	4		
Off Licences	4		
Fishmongers	2		
Total premises	52		

(iii) Details of complaints dealt with:-

(a) Meat pie with foreign body present, i.e. a finger dressing - prosecution under Section 2 and the manufacturers fined £20 with 5 gns. costs.

(b) Smoked boiling ham with discoloration - sent for analysis and found not to be harmful.

(c) Cooked sausages thought to have caused diarrhoea and vomiting - sent for analysis and found satisfactory.

(d) Mouldy bread rolls - withdrawn from stock immediately and destroyed.

(e) Tin of condensed milk said to be 'lumpy' - found to be due to overlong storage.

(f) Fifteen condemnation Certificates were issued, mainly on request of traders for the usual variety of tinned foods, meat etc.

SWIMMING POOLS

(i) Blue Pool

This public pool was conducted in a satisfactory manner. Daily local checks of free chlorine are taken, and I inspect these records from time to time, and also take the occasional sample for bacteriological examination. These were all satisfactory.

Source of water is from the mains and constant re-circulation on a 6/8 hour basis is maintained. Treatment consists of filtration by twin Diafilters, followed by chlorination and then aeration over a cascade.

(ii) Paddling Pool, King George's Field

Hand chlorination of this shallow pool is used and is, in the main, satisfactory.

(iii) Shurnhold School

Chlorination and filtration plant proved adequate and samples taken were satisfactory.

(iv) Lowbourne School

Again a small training pool with adequate plant, and samples taken were satisfactory.

OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAY PREMISES ACT 1963

As mentioned earlier, most of the initial inspections were carried out, and details are as follows:-

	Number of Premises Registered During the Year	Total Number of Registered Premises at end of year	Number of Persons Employed	No. of Registered Premises receiving a General Inspection During the Year
Offices	8	24	235	15
Shops	22	108	506	107
Wholesale Warehouses	-	1	5	1
Catering Est.	4	13	39	12
Fuel Storage Depot.	-	1	-	1
Totals	34	147	785	136

Number of visits of all kinds to registered premises 291

Action so far has resulted as follows:-

Defect	Found	Rectified	Outstanding
No Thermometer (Sec.6)	40	35	5
No Abstract of Act (Sec.50)	48	42	6
No First Aid Box (Sec. 24)	35	32	3
Unsatisfactory Sanitary Conv. (Sec. 9)	21	14	7
Unsatisfactory Washing Facilities (Sec. 10)	21	14	7
Unsatisfactory Drinking Water (Sec. 11)	1	1	-
Unsatisfactory Accommodation for Clothing (Sec. 12)	1	1	-
Inadequate Seating Facilities (Sec. 13)	3	3	-
Inadequate Eating Facilities (Sec. 15)	1	-	1
Unsound Construction (Sec.16)	4	4	-
Written Arrangements (Circ. 10/P.5)	2	2	-
Totals	177	148	29

FACTORIES ACT 1961

Action taken is shown in the following table:-

FACTORIES

	Number on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Inspections				
(1) Factories in which Section 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are enforced by Local Authority (non-power)	-	-	-	-
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (power)	46	10	-	-
(3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	2	-	-	-
Total	48	10	-	-

	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	Referred BY H.M. Inspector	Number of Cases in which prosecutions were instituted
Defects					
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	1	1	-	-	-
Overcrowding (S.2)	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable Temperature (S.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	1	-	-	-

Outworkers - Making apparel 4